

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 8-18 remain pending in the application.

Applicants appreciatively note that claim 11 would be allowable if written to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph and include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claim 11 has been amended to overcome the indefiniteness rejection. However, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the patentability of base claim 8 in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Claims 8-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. More specifically, the language recited in claims 8-11 are deemed indefinite. In response, claims 8-11 have been amended and rendered definite. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 8-18 be withdrawn.

Claims 8-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bishop (US 4,869,412). In response, claim 1 has been amended to include further limitations and is now believed to be patentable for the reasons set for below.

Bishop disclose a device for hauling an elongate object 6 (See, for example, Fig. 1 and 2) comprising: traction means 1 (See, for example, Fig. 1 and 2), and movement instigating means 4 and 5, traction means 1 and movement instigating means 4 and 5 cooperating with a fixed drum 3, which provide a continuous camming path on which the traction means 1 and elongate object 6 are wound. According to Bishop, the endless belt that constitutes the traction means 1 is driven by pulleys, so that it slides along the continuous path accompanied by the wound part of elongated object 6 which is applied to the belt (See, for example, Fig. 1 and 2).

However, Bishop fails to disclose gripping means for automatically keeping the traction means and the elongate object that is to be hauled, continuously in contact with one another over at least a section of the elongate object and being further configure for automatically adapting to variations in the diameter of the elongate object. This is because that, according to

Bishop, elongate object 6 is maintained close to traction belt 1 simply by the fact that it is wound around the drum 3 on the traction belt.

Bishop's device comprises a driving and guiding component. This feature implies that, in working conditions, the object to be hauled is wound around the drum and thus doesn't pass through Bishop's device keeping a rectilinear position. This constraint makes Bishop's device inappropriate to haul objects with large diameters and bearing only a large radius of curvature.

Bishop's device working conditions imply that the object to be hauled has a diameter which matches the size of the continuous camming path. This constraint also makes Bishop's device inappropriate to haul objects with large diameters or with inconstant diameters.

Based on the above reasons, Bishop fails to disclose all of the limitations recited in claim 8. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 8 should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Moreover, the technical problem solved by the device according to the present application, is to find a solution to haul automatically and securing an object with a variable diameter. Bishop fails to disclose or suggest a device or a structure that can achieve the above solution. Thus, claim 8 should be considered as being inventive.

Claim 8-10 are further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Powell (US 2,679,924). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Powell discloses a device for hauling an elongate object 13 (See, for example, Fig. 3) comprising traction means 10 and 11 (See, for example, Fig. 4 or 5), gripping means 58 and 70 (See, for example, Fig. 3) and movement instigating means 108, 106 103 and 104 (See, for example, Fig 3). However, Powell fails to disclose that the gripping means are structured to automatically adapting themselves to the variations of the diameter of the hauled object. Moreover Powell doesn't disclose that the gripping means are given a relative translation movement with respect to the object, in a direction opposite to the direction of hauling.

Therefore, Powell fails to disclose all of the limitations recited in claim 8. Accordingly the rejection of claim 8 should be withdrawn.

Moreover the technical problem solved by the device according to the present application, which is to find a solution to haul automatically and securely an object with a variable diameter, which is not disclosed or even suggested by Powell's document. On the contrary, Powell's document discloses a device comprising traction means made with chains belts 10 and 11 (See, for example, Fig. 4) rolling on rigid backing plates 40 (see, for example, Fig. 4) chain belts being covered by juxtaposed gripping shoes with concave grooves with a radius adapted to the radius of the object to be hauled the radius of the groove being adapted to a minimum and a maximum radius. According to Powell, the traction means are configured to maintain the belts in strict parallelism. Moreover, Powell discloses a hauling device for which the gap between the two facing belts is adjusted before using the device and cannot be adapted to a change of the diameter of the elongate object without stopping the device. So the device disclosed by Powell is not designed to adapt itself automatically to any change of diameter. Thus, if the elongate object doesn't have a constant diameter, Powell's device will fail to provide a continuous contact between the traction means and the object to be hauled.

Therefore, Powell's document doesn't suggest a solution to the aforementioned problem that is not even mentioned in it. Accordingly, claim 8 is not obvious over Powell.

Claims 9-10 and 12 recite additional, important limitations and should be patentable for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1 as well as on their own merits.

Claims 13-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bishop. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons as below.

Claims 13-18 are dependent on claim 8 and recite additional, important limitations. Claim 13-18 should be patentable for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 8 as well as on their own merits.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to

facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
LOWE HAUPTMAN HAM & BERNER, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kenneth M. Berner".

Kenneth M. Berner
Registration No. 37,093

1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 684-1111
(703) 518-5499 Facsimile
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KMB/SY/cac